The Sufi Tradition and Political Islam in Kashmir during the Twentieth Century

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The Sufi traditions of Kashmir have a rich and complex history, deeply intertwined with the cultural, social, and religious fabric of the region. Kashmir, known for its spiritual heritage, has impacted the religious and intellectual landscape of Kashmir. The Sufi orders that flourished in Kashmir include the *Qadiri*, *Naqshbandi*, *Suhrawardi*, *Kubravi,* and *Rishi silsilahs*.[1] These Sufi orders brought their distinct teachings and practices, contributing to the diversity of spiritual expression in the region. Sufism, often called the mystical dimension of Islam, emphasizes the inward search for God and the cultivation of spiritual insight and love. Central to Sufism is the concept of direct communion with the divine, epitomized by the role of Sufi *shaykhs* as spiritual masters and mediators. These masters, known as *pirs* or *murshids*, impart religious teachings and serve as guides and mentors for the spiritual journey towards God. In Kashmir, Sufism played a crucial role in shaping the religious and cultural ethos, providing a platform for spiritual wayfaring. Sufism became the dominant form of Islam in Kashmir. By the end of the Seventeenth century, almost all of Kashmir had accepted Islam, and the Sufis played pivotal roles in this conversion, particularly the *Rishis*. Ishaq Khan writes that the *Rishis* helped preach the Sufi tradition and the message of Islam in rural areas of the region using the vernacular language *Koshur* as a medium of expression and communication.[2] The Sufi tradition in Kashmir stands as a vibrant tapestry woven with threads of spirituality, syncretism, and socio-political dynamics. Rooted in the teachings of the Qur'an and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad, Sufism in Kashmir evolved into a unique expression, blending mysticism with indigenous cultural practices. This rich tradition not only shapes the spiritual landscape of the region but also profoundly influences its socio-political fabric.[3]

The Sufi saints attracted followers through their piety, wisdom, and spiritual charisma, establishing *khanqahs* (Sufi hospices) where seekers could engage in spiritual practices and receive guidance. The reverence for Sufi saints and their teachings remains profound, with *khanqahs* and *dargahs* serving as centers of spiritual guidance and communitarian cohesion.[4] The teachings of Kashmiri Sufis often emphasized the universality of divine love, the importance of inner purification, transcending sectarian divides, and fostering a culture of coexistence and mutual respect.

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[1] Abdul Qayyum Rafiqi, *"Sufism in Kashmir"*, (Srinagar: Gulshan Publication, 2015).
[2] Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam: The Role of Muslim Rishis* (Delhi: Manohar, 2002).
[3] Wani, *Islam in Kashmir.*
[4] Freny Manecksha, *Behold I shine, A narrative of Kashmiri women and children* (New Delhi, Rupa Publication, 2017),

Nevertheless, the sanctity of shrines extends beyond religious rituals, encompassing a realm of healing and solace. In a region marked by political turmoil and psychological distress, the Sufi tradition emerges as a beacon of hope, offering solace to the afflicted and healing to the wounded. Kashmir, a region steeped in rich cultural heritage and religious diversity, has served as a crucible for spiritual and ideological contestations. The interplay of sacred sites, preaching rights, and socio-political control have shaped communal identities and mirrored the evolving socio-political landscape. Yet, amidst the spiritual vibrancy of Sufism in Kashmir, controversies and critiques abound.

Till the end of the nineteenth century, Sufism remains the dominant form of Islam among the Kashmiri. Most Kashmiri Muslims owed allegiance to one Sufi order or another. All over the Muslim world, from the late nineteenth century, Sufism came under sharp attack from the Muslim reformers, both 'reformists' and 'Islamists'. The advent of Islamic 'reformists' in Kashmir in the late nineteenth century, catalyzed by interactions with mainland movements, particularly from Punjab, Delhi, and Amritsar, further enriched this landscape. The rise of reformist movements, such as the Ahl-i-Hadith and the Jama'at-i-Islami, has sparked debates over the "authenticity" of Sufi practices and their adherence to Islamic orthodoxy. While some Muslim groups or movements view Sufism as a conduit for spiritual enlightenment, others perceive it as a deviation from the pristine teachings of Islam. But before the coming of the Ahl-i-Hadith, the conflict between the two *Mirwaizes* of Kashmir, Mirwaiz Kashmir and Mirwaiz Hamadani, over the preaching rights in one or the other shrines became a contested issue.[5] These conflicts over sacred spaces and preaching rights in the important religious sites in Kashmir played a crucial role in shaping community identities and reflecting the changing socio-political landscape of the region. At the heart of these disputes were competing claims to leadership among the Kashmiri Muslim elites, who sought to assert their influence over the subjects through control over city shrines and religious patronage networks. In this conflict between the two *Mirwaizes*, the issue of "authenticity" and preaching "true" Islam plays a crucial role in articulating their authority.[6]

The *khanqah* came to exercise a symbolic power over the city, its inhabitants, and its sacred past; as a result, it became the center of political battles between the rival groups of Kashmiri Muslims and their Sufi supporters and detractors. Since the shrine means to assert both political

[5] Chitralekha Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging: Islam, Regional Identity, and the Making of Kashmir* (C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 2004.
[6] Upendra Kishen Zutshi, *Emergence of Political Awakening in Kashmir* (Manohar Publications, 1986).

and religious legitimacy, these groups attempted to gain control over its management and, through it, control over the Muslim community itself. Thus, the competition over one or the other shrines was almost always cast in terms of a battle between *'sahih/asal Islam'* (true Islam) and *'kufr/be-dini'* (infidelity). Unsurprisingly, shrines in Kashmir became the centers of political and religious controversy in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This was the period of the sweeping change in the political economy of Kashmir, as the Dogra state became more bureaucratized, a land settlement was carried out under the direction of colonial officials, the shawl trade declined, Kashmiri Muslims began to organize as a community, the traditional landed, and merchant elites began to lose control over wealth and power.

The transformative impact of modernity, particularly the advent of print media, revolutionized the dissemination of knowledge and ideas within the Muslim community. The printing press became a strong tool used by religious reformers, facilitating the spread of Islamic teachings and debates over interpretations. This technological rise reshaped religious life, empowering individuals and groups to assert their ideological narratives and challenge established norms.

The Ahl-i-Hadith movement emerged as a challenging force, advocating for a return to the pristine sources of Islam and espousing a literal interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith. The movement, characterized by its emphasis on theological purity, found resonance in Kashmir, catalyzed debates, and redefined religious landscapes. The Ahl-i-Hadith claimed that Muslims had strayed away from the path of "true" Islam and added many innovations that had no validity in Islam.[7] They attacked the custodians of the shrines, accusing them of hiding the true message of Islam and condemned that the shared religious tradition and space where both Hinduism and Islam interacted and came together, such as the shrines of the saints, were threatening the purity and integrity of Muslim community. The Ahl-i-Hadith did not emerge as a mass movement because of their fierce opposition to the Sufi tradition, which enabled Islam to win masses of converts among Kashmiri. The custodians and the devotees accused the Ahl-i-Hadith of being *be-din* (irreligious) and *munkir-i-auliya* (deniers of Sufis).

However, the latter half of the twentieth century also witnessed the rise of various critics of political Islam *(Siyasi Islam)* in Kashmir in the form of the Jama'at-i-Islami. These critics, often influenced by 'Islamist' and 'reformist' ideologies, raised concerns about the politicization of Islam and its implications for governance, social justice, and human rights.

[7] Bashir Ahmad Khan, "The Ahl-i-Hadith: A Socio-Religious Reform Movement in Kashmir," *The Muslim* 90 (Spring 2007).

Political Islam refers to the idea of Islam as not just a personal faith but also as a political ideology governing public and social life. 'Political Islam' refers to the intersection of Islam as a religion and a political ideology, encompassing various ideologies and movements that seek to establish Islamic principles within political structures. It signifies how Islam influences political thought, governance, and policymaking in predominantly Muslim societies or communities.[8]

In Kashmir, the concept of political Islam has been manifested through movements advocating for the establishment of an Islamic state or the implementation of *Shariah* laws. This movement often emerged in response to perceived injustices or as part of broader struggles for self-determination. Some proponents of political Islam in Kashmir critiqued Sufi traditions for what they perceived as deviations from "pure" or "true" Islam. They criticized certain Sufi practices, such as "shrine worship", veneration of saints, and mystical rituals, as innovations (*bid'ah*) or idolatry. These critics often sought to reform or purify Sufi practices according to their understanding and interpretation of Islamic teachings.

The Jama'at-i-Islami, focusing on Islamic revivalism and adherence to the Quranic principles, emerged as a significant political force in Kashmir. Its critique of Sufism as perceived deviations from 'authentic' Islamic teachings resonated with segments of the population, sparking debates and reshaping religious discourses. Yet, amidst these ideological battles, the complex interplay of tradition and modernity, orthodoxy, and innovation continue to shape the religious landscape of Kashmir.

The rise of "Political Islam" in Kashmir sometimes led to conflicts over religious authority between traditionalist Sufi *'ulama* and Islamist activists. Sufi leaders, who often had deep roots in their communities and enjoyed widespread respect, viewed the proponents of political Islam as challengers to their religious authority. This tension sometimes resulted in competition for followers and influence within Kashmiri Muslim society.

The interaction between "Political Islam" and Kashmiri Sufi traditions in the twentieth century reflected broader debates within the frameworks of the relationship between religion and politics, "orthodoxy" and "innovation," and tradition and modernity. These dynamics continued to shape Kashmir's religious, social, and political landscape in the twentieth century.

[8] Frederic Volpi, *Political Islam: A Critical Reader* (London: Routledge, 2013).

The evolution of organizations like Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam as proponents of the Sufi tradition underscores the enduring quest for religious authenticity and social transformation. By propagating the teachings of Sufis and countering the critics of reformist and Islamist scholars, Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam counters the critics of reformist and Islamist scholars.[9] Sufi leaders and their followers in Kashmir responded to critiques from political Islamists by reaffirming the importance of their spiritual heritage and emphasizing the value of love and tolerance promoted by Sufi teachings. They often portrayed Sufism as a unifying force that transcended sectarian divides and contributed to the social cohesion of Kashmiri society. Additionally, Sufi leaders sometimes dialogue with political Islamists to find common ground and bridge ideological differences. The counter-critiques by the Anjuman were not solely initiated due to reformists' critique of Sufi traditions and rituals. Another significant factor was the concern among the Anjuman members regarding the potential challenge to their authority in the Kashmir valley. They sought to consolidate their power by uniting traditional religious scholars (*'ulama*) under a single organization to uphold their legitimacy among the populace. This strategic move aimed to maintain their influence and control over religious discourse and practices in the region.

One common factor among the different Anjumans in Kashmir, be it the Ahl-i-hadith, the Jama'at-i-Islami, and the Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam, is their strategic deployment of Islam and the Qur'an as the principal instrument of advocacy. Rooted in a collective aspiration to revive an unadulterated manifestation of Islam, they have persistently attempted to combat perceived deviancy and uphold doctrinal purity throughout their respective historical trajectories.

Significance of the Study

Numerous scholarly works have delved into the intersection of Sufism and Islam in Kashmir's historical context, spanning from the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries. This region has constantly captivated the interest of researchers and gained considerable scholarly attention. However, with the onset of the insurgency, Kashmir seized international attention, opening a new realm of investigation for scholars.

[9] Mushtaq Ahmad Wani, *Muslim Religious Trends in Kashmir in Modern Times* (Patna: Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Library, 1997),

Despite the abundant studies of Sufism in Kashmir, particularly during earlier epochs, the Sufi traditions of the region in the twentieth century remain notably underexplored. This scholarly gap is particularly significant given the broader backdrops of global discussions and contestations regarding Sufi traditions and anti-Sufi polemics across the Muslim world. A comprehensive analysis of this aspect becomes imperative in interpreting how the Sufi tradition in Kashmir navigated through the chaotic currents of socio-political changes characteristic of the twentieth century. By examining the challenges encountered and strategies employed by Sufi practitioners during this period, we can collect valuable insights into the resilience and adaptability of Sufi traditions in the face of inter-religious polemics and transformative socio-political dynamics.

Moreover, an overlooked facet deserving scholarly attention is the role and position of marginalized groups within the Sufi tradition. This includes exploring how Sufi practices provided spiritual solace and transcendence for women, transcending conventional barriers of gender and religious affiliation. A nuanced investigation into these realms implies improving our understanding of the multifaceted dynamics underpinning Sufi traditions in Kashmir during the twentieth century.

HYPOTHESES

For the detailed and analytical study of the interplay between Sufism and "Political Islam" within the context of Kashmir during the twentieth century, several hypotheses have been put forward:

1) The continuing relevance of Sufism amidst the socio-political transformations in Kashmir is attributed to its deep-rooted association and symbiotic relationship with diverse social strata. Despite the advancement of modernity and the ascendance of political Islam, Sufism persists due to its intimate connection with the lives of various social groups, thereby preserving its identity.
2) Sufism contends with existential challenges in Kashmir, particularly in the face of the ascendancy of radical or evolving Islamic sects such as Ahl-i-Hadith and Jama'at-i-Islami. These competing ideologies threaten the significance and legitimacy of Sufism, thus necessitating a nuanced examination of its struggle to maintain relevance and coherence in the region.

3) A gendered analysis reveals that within the framework of Sufism, women experience a certain degree of agency and autonomy in their engagement with spiritual practices. This assertion suggests that Sufism may offer women a relatively conducive environment for spiritual expression and participation, contrasting with broader societal norms and constraints.

Timespan and Research Questions

The period of the study will cover the twentieth century. This was the period when Sufism, all over the world, came under sharp attack from the Salafists, and one of the important Salafi schools of thought in the world, the Ahl-i-Hadith, was born in India. It was a period when many reform movements, like the Ahl-i-Hadith and the Jama'at-i-Islami, emerged in Kashmir. These reformists were active in Kashmir politics and took the driving seat of Kashmir's future politics, particularly the Jama'at-i-Islami. This was precisely when Kashmir was on the anvil of the modern age. This study will focus on the following points /research questions:

1. What was the nature of the relationship between various social groups and Sufi traditions in Kashmir?
2. How do the Sufi traditions in Kashmir navigate and respond to the diverse expectations of devotees, disciples, and common people, and how do these interactions influence the perpetuation and evolution of Sufi practices and beliefs?
3. In what ways do Kashmiri women actively participate in and contribute to the Sufi tradition, and how does their engagement shape their spiritual experiences and identities within Kashmiri society?
4. What specific aspects of modernity, such as technological advancements and socio-political changes, impact the practice and perception of Sufism in Kashmir, and how do these influences shape the challenges faced by the Kashmiri Sufi tradition, particularly in the face of political Islam?
5. How do political Islamist movements in Kashmir challenge or contest the authority and legitimacy of Sufi traditions, and what strategies do the Sufi practitioners employ to defend and maintain their religious and cultural heritage amidst these challenges?

Methodology

Adopting a qualitative methodological approach, this study employs descriptive and analytical methods to synthesize insights from oral and written sources. This study will pay close attention

to the Kashmiri Sufi traditions in the twentieth century, on the one hand, and the ideological challenges that emanate from the Ahl-i-Hadith and the Jama'at-i-Islami to them, on the other hand. The study will also analyze the response of the Kashmiri Sufi *pirs* and their devotees to the ideological challenges coming from these two groups. For this research, interviews were held with the key figures, including the *mutawallis*, *khadims* of the *dargahs*, the masters of the Sufi orders, and the devotees. Various materials through the fieldwork are supplemented by the examinations of historical sources, including legal documents, religious pamphlets, vernacular historical accounts (*tawarikh*), biographical works (*tazkirah*), and family genealogy (*shajarahs*). Secondary sources are also utilized to accomplish the research. Through this comprehensive methodological framework, the study aims to contribute to a nuanced understanding of Kashmiri Sufi culture and its interaction with broader ideological currents during the twentieth century.

Literature Review

Several scholars have explored various aspects of the history of Kashmir, mainly focusing on the rich tradition of Sufism in their books and articles. These scholarly works contribute to a deeper understanding of the region's cultural and religious heritage, illustrating the profound influence of Sufism on Kashmir's historical narrative. The extensive body of literature unravels the complexities of Kashmir's spiritual and historical landscape.

Ian Copland's article, "Islam and Political Mobilization in Kashmir, 1931-34," explores the role of Islam in political movements during the early 1930s in Kashmir. He argues that religion was central to political mobilization, with Islamic symbols and rhetoric being used to challenge the Hindu-dominated bureaucracy. The article highlights the sectarian divisions within the Muslim community and critiques the idea that Muslims in Kashmir acted as a unified group. Copland also examines the influence of British colonial policies on Kashmir's political situation, offering a detailed analysis of the period and its complexities.

Muhammad Ishaq Khan's work, "Perspectives on Kashmir: Historical Dimensions," delves into Kashmir's history, highlighting the evolution of Kashmiri identity, particularly "Kashmiriyat," a concept rooted in shared cultural and religious values. He traces the development of this identity from the Sultanate period to the 20th century, emphasizing its manifestation in early mystic poetry that transcended religious differences. Khan also explores how Islam in Kashmir harmonized with local mystic traditions and how modern educational

movements fostered political consciousness among Kashmiri Muslims, marking a shift in Kashmiriyat from religious to regional identity.

Ashiq Kashmiri's 'Tarikh-i-Tehrik-i-Islami Jammu wa Kashmir' provides a detailed account of the Jama'at-i-Islami in Jammu and Kashmir. It also covers the origins of the Jama'at-i-Islami and its links to Kashmir. The second volume focuses on the Jama'at's growth in the region, highlighting its role in education and political involvement while addressing the opposition from traditional *'ulama*. However, Kashmiri's pro-Jama'at stance may introduce biases, necessitating a critical approach to his work.

"Tarikh-i-Ahl-i-Hadith Jammu wa Kashmir" by Sufi Ahmad Muslim is a key historical work detailing the origins and growth of the Ahl-i-Hadith movement in Jammu and Kashmir. Written by an Ahl-i-Hadith official, it traces the movement's evolution, highlighting the efforts of its scholars in spreading their reformist interpretation of Islam. The book discusses the influence of mainland Indian scholars on Kashmir and the role of the 'ulama in shaping reformist ideas. It also documents establishing institutional networks and the challenges faced by the Ahl-i-Hadith from Sufi traditions. However, due to the author's affiliation with Anjuman, this work may find biases and needs careful analysis for a balanced understanding.

Yoginder Sikand's article, "The Emergence and Development of the Jama'at-i-Islami of Jammu and Kashmir (1940s-1990)," offers a crucial analysis of the Islamic political movement in the region. It explores the Jama'at's role in shaping the socio-political landscape of Jammu and Kashmir through education and social reform, promoting Islamic values while challenging traditional Sufi practices. The study covers the movement's evolution from a religious group to a political force, highlighting the complex relationship between religion, politics, and conflict in Kashmir. However, Sikand does not address the critiques from proponents of Sufi traditions.

In "Languages of Belonging: Islam, Regional Identity, and the Making of Kashmir," Chitralekha Zutshi explores how religious, regional, and cultural identities in Kashmir have evolved. She traces Kashmiri's identity from the precolonial period to the early 20th century, emphasizing its fluidity rather than a fixed, unchanging nature. Zutshi examines the influence of historical figures like Lal Ded and Nund Rishi, the impact of Mughal and colonial rule, and the socio-economic changes brought by colonial policies. She discusses the role of religion, education, and politics in shaping communitarian identities, highlighting the contested nature of Kashmiri identity throughout history. The book also covers political developments from the

1930s onwards, focusing on figures like Sheikh Abdullah and the complex negotiations of identity leading to the partition. Zutshi argues for a nuanced understanding of Kashmir's history, acknowledging its pluralistic traditions and diverse voices.

Mridu Rai's book, "Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects: Islam, Rights and the History of Kashmir," examines Kashmir's complex political and social dynamics from the inception of the Dogra rule in 1846. Rai argues that the British establishment of Dogra rule marked a shift towards Hindu sovereignty over a predominantly Muslim population, leading to political disenfranchisement and socio-economic marginalization of Kashmiri Muslims. The book details the lasting impact of this governance on social and political tensions, the politicization of religious identities, and the biased distribution of government benefits, which have contributed to ongoing unrest in the region. Rai also explores how cultural narratives and archaeological knowledge were used to reinforce Hindu dominance and marginalize Muslim historical claims, particularly under the leadership of figures like Sheikh Abdullah in 1932.

Yoginder Sikand's essay, "Popular Kashmiri Sufism and the Challenges of Scripturalist Islam (1900-1989)," examines the relationship between Kashmiri Sufism and Islamic reformist movements like Ahl-i-Hadith and Jama'at-i-Islami. Sikand highlights how Sufism played a crucial role in converting Kashmiris to Islam and creating a cultural-religious framework. The rise of reformist movements, which opposed Sufi practices, marked a shift within the Muslim community, with criticisms focusing on alleged deviations from authentic Islam. Sikand's work, while primarily covering the early 20th century to 1989, sets the stage for understanding modern challenges to Sufi traditions. However, it leaves gaps in addressing the post-1989 socio-political impacts on Sufism, internal Sufi dynamics, and the broader social influence of these interactions.

Zohra Batul's article, "Gendered Politics and Public Sphere: Shrines in Kashmir Valley," explores the intersection of gender, religion, and public space in Kashmir. She argues that Sufi shrines in the region create unique public spaces that empower women by allowing them social interaction, political awareness, and collective action. Despite being male-dominated, these shrines facilitate greater female participation than other public spaces. Batul's ethnographic research at shrines like Amir-i-Kabir, Dastgeer Sahib, and Chrar-i-Shareef shows how women engage in religious rituals, fostering a sense of community and identity. However, she also notes that patriarchal control persists, with the overall management of shrines remaining under male authority, thus limiting women's participation. While Batul highlights the empowering

aspects of these spaces, she also points out the need for more detailed studies on the rituals and practices women follow in these Sufi traditions.

Nazir Ahmad Shah's thesis, "Socio-Religious Reform Movements in Kashmir (1819-1947)," examines Kashmir's social structure, religious practices, and the impact of various reform movements. It highlights the contributions of Muslim organizations like Anjuman-i-Nusratul Islam and Ahl-i-Hadith in education and religious reform. The thesis also explores the roles of Anjuman-i-Nusrat-ul-Islam, Arya Samaj, Women's Welfare Organizations, and the Church Missionary Society in modernizing education. However, it lacks a detailed discussion on inter-religious debates and omits the Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam's role, a significant contemporary movement.

Most of the works mentioned above have brought insightful perspectives to our understanding of the interface between politics, religion and region, language, and other cultural manifestations of Kashmiri Islam. Studies on "reformist trends" and Sufi traditions have explored the challenges to patterns of Sufi authority. However, they have not analysed the techniques used by Sufis to respond to the "anti-Sufi" polemics. The following two works in Urdu can be considered valuable sources for exploring the methods and techniques appropriated by the proponents of the Sufi traditions and practices.

Sayyid Arif Ahmad Qadri's book "Amir-i-Shari'at aur Unke 'Aqaid" offers a detailed exploration of Qasim Shah Bukhari's life, his views on Islam, and his involvement in socio-political debates between Sufis and anti-Sufis in Kashmir. Qadri also discusses the origins of the Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam, emphasizing its role in reforming Kashmiri Muslim society through its mission based on "Hanafi Maslak and Sufi Mashrab." One of the book's key contributions includes interviews with Bukhari, revealing his efforts to unite Kashmiri Muslims across sects. However, Qadri's work has limitations, particularly in excluding other viewpoints, resulting in a one-sided narrative.

Ghulam Hasan Zargar's 'Noor-i-Dil' is essential for understanding Allama Qasim Shah Bukhari's impact on Kashmir. It covers Bukhari's life and the history of Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam, highlighting his efforts to promote education and his role in theological debates, especially against the Qadianis. Zargar also includes many letters and fatwas from Bukhari, offering insights into the intellectual climate of the time. However, Zargar's work is sometimes

overly admiring of Bukhari, leading to a somewhat biased portrayal that may gloss over certain complexities and controversies.

Chapterisation

This thesis consists of six chapters, organized both chronically and thematically, including the introduction and conclusion.

The first chapter serves as the introductory section of the thesis, laying the foundation for the entire study. It begins by providing an overview of the research background, providing the background information for the reader to understand the context and significance of the study. This chapter also articulates the hypothesis, outlining the primary assumptions and propositions that the research aims to focus on. Additionally, it presents the key research questions that guide the investigation, offering a roadmap for the subsequent chapters. A thorough literature review is also included in this chapter, critically examining previous studies and theoretical frameworks relevant to the research topic. This review not only highlights the existing gaps in the literature but also situates the current research within the broader academic discourse. By the end of this chapter, readers will understand the research problem, objectives, and the scholarly context in which the study is positioned.

The second chapter primarily delves into traditions and rituals associated with the Sufi shrines, which most people in Kashmir have largely embraced. This chapter explores the specific *riwayat* (traditions) and *rusumat* (rituals) practiced at various shrines in Kashmir, highlighting how these practices have been perpetuated through generations and are deeply rooted in the regional ethos. Additionally, it examines the effects of these traditions on diverse groups of people from different religions and castes and the role of *khanqahs* as a medium of communication between society and faith. The chapter begins with an introduction to Sufism and its emergence in Kashmir, providing a historical context for its development. Since shrines have always been central components of Kashmiri society in general and Kashmiri Islam in particular, this chapter discusses the significance of major Sufi shrines in Kashmir and their pivotal role in the daily lives of the Kashmiri people.

Furthermore, the chapter delves into the socio-religious, spiritual, and psychological significance of the Sufi tradition and spaces within Kashmir Valley. Various activities and practices are examined in this context, particularly those that became contentious issues between ‘reformist’ and traditional scholars by the twentieth century. These debates highlight

the evolving nature of Sufi practices and the challenges they faced from different ideological perspectives. A crucial aspect of this chapter is the focus on women's participation in Sufi traditions in Kashmir. It explores how Sufi traditions provided a spiritual space for women, allowing them to transcend barriers of gender and religion. The chapter also addresses the theme of women's visits to shrines, which became a significant point of contention in the polemical debates between Sufi adherents and anti-sufi groups. It underscores the inclusive nature of Sufi practices and the resistance they faced from more conservative or radical elements within society. This chapter analyses the traditions and rituals associated with Sufi shrines in Kashmir, emphasizing their enduring impact on Kashmiri society and the dynamic interplay between religious and social groups. It also illuminates the crucial role of women within these traditions, highlighting the inclusive and transformative power of Sufism in the region.

Chapter three delves into the emergence of the Ahl-i-Hadith and the dissemination of their notions of 'reform' within the Kashmiri society during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By critically examining historical sources and scholarly analyses, this chapter explains the socio-political and intellectual conditions that facilitated the rise of 'reformist' thought in Kashmir. It also explores the key figures and movements associated with the propagation of reformist ideologies, situating them within the broader contexts of colonial encounters, socio-economic transformations, and religious discourses in Kashmiri society. This contextual analysis is crucial to understanding the genesis and trajectory of the 'reformist' movements as they entered Kashmir. Central to this analysis is exploring how these reformist ideologies were transmitted from the Indian mainland to Kashmir and the challenges they encountered upon arrival. This transmission is examined through a detailed analysis of the strategies used by reformist groups to disseminate their mission among the Kashmiri populace. This chapter critically addresses the core questions these reformists raised against Sufi practices and traditions in Kashmir. It interrogates whether these critiques were intended solely for societal reformation or if they were also aimed at consolidating the reformists' authority within the existing social framework. By scrutinizing these aspects, this chapter constructs a comprehensive framework that sheds light on the arrival, challenges, motivations, and impact of reformist ideologies within the intricate tapestry of Kashmiri society. Furthermore, the analysis extends to the socio-religious dynamics of Kashmir, examining how the reformists' critique of Sufi traditions intersected with the broader socio-economic and political transformations of the period. This includes an exploration of the colonial administration's role

in shaping religious discourses and the responses of the local population to these reformist ideas. Overall, this chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the emergence of the Ahl-i-Hadith and their reformist agenda in Kashmir, offering insights into the complex interplay between reformist ideologies and the socio-political landscape of the region during a transformative historical period.

Chapter four shifts the analytical focus toward examining the ascent of political Islam in twentieth-century Kashmir and its challenges to the structure and patterns of Sufi authority. This analysis delves into the historical and ideological dynamics that have shaped the interactions between these two facets of Islamic thought, mainly focusing on the political upheavals of twentieth-century Kashmir. A scholarly discourse and diverse perspectives on 'political Islam' are also included in this chapter to understand the concept of 'political Islam' and its use in the academic arena. This chapter examines the rise of political Islam in Kashmir, exemplified by movements such as the Jama'at-i-Islami Jammu and Kashmir and their critique of Sufi practices and beliefs. It highlights how the proponents of political Islam viewed Sufism and syncretic traditions as incompatible with their vision of an Islamic polity based on strict adherence to the Qur'an and Sunnah. This chapter also discussed socio-political challenges posed by political Islam to traditional Sufi institutions in Kashmir, emphasizing the ideological contestations over the issues of authenticity, governance, and religious purity. Another important aspect is how the proponents of the Jama'at-i-Islami mobilized the masses to accept their understanding of Islam, the concept of political Islam, which was new to the general public. To make the political philosophy of Jama'at understandable, they introduced their model of government or state to accommodate itself to the people of the region. By critically analyzing both primary sources and secondary literature, this chapter aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the evolving dynamics between Sufi traditions and political Islam, contributing to broader discussions on religious and ideological conflicts within Muslim societies. It also elucidates the dynamics of these ideological confrontations, highlighting how political Islam criticized the perceived passivity, syncretic practices, and hierarchical structures of Sufism, thereby contributing to a nuanced understanding of religious and ideological contestations within the region.

The fifth chapter focuses on the Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam Jammu and Kashmir, established in 1931-32 by a group of the conventional *'ulama* of Kashmir who recognized the need to organize and defend their beliefs and practices. The Anjuman sought to mobilize various Sufi groups under a common banner, emphasizing the importance of Sufi teaching and traditions

within Kashmiri Islam. The immediate purpose of establishing the Anjuman itself was to counter the propaganda carried out by the activists of the Ahmadiyya Movement as well as the non-conformist (*ghair muqallid*) version of Islam preached and propagated by the Anjuman-i-Ahl-i-Hadith. Later, the Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam Jammu and Kashmir also stood against the Jama'at-i-Islami. Central to the Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam's engagement in the polemic was their adherence to the Hanafi School of Islamic jurisprudence and their identification with the Sufi path, as summarized in their slogan, *"Hanafi Maslak Sufi Mashrab."* Through numerous tracts and monthly journals, the members of the Anjuman articulated their doctrinal stances, defended their beliefs, and justified their religious and ritual practices. Their objective, as outlined in their monthly journals and other tracts, was to raise awareness about prevailing conditions within the Muslim world and to propagate the teachings of the *'ulama* (scholars) and Sufi saints. This chapter also explores the role of Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam and its program to defend Sufi beliefs, practices, and institutions. Before delving into the organizational dynamics of Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam, it explains how indigenous beliefs were integrated into Islam, particularly within the socio-cultural milieu of Kashmir. This contextual examination not only enriches our understanding of the local manifestations of Islam in Kashmir but also sheds light on the intricate interplay between pre-existing beliefs and the emergent Islamic framework. This chapter also discusses the various interpretations of the contested concepts within Islam, the methodologies used to support their positions, and the broader socio-religious context that informed their deliberations. Analyzing the arguments presented in Anjuman's tracts and journal, it analyses their efforts to reconcile Hanafi jurisprudence with Sufi spirituality, navigate theological controversies, and assert their vision and version of Islamic orthodoxy amidst competing interpretations within the Muslim community. This study illustrates the complexities inherent in the religious discourses and the dynamic interplay between traditions, innovation, and orthodoxy in Islamic thought and practice.

This chapter is followed by a conclusion that summarizes the major findings of this study, restates the research problems and objectives, and discusses the future research direction.

Future Research Direction

Although scholarly literature has neglected detailed discussions on certain aspects of Kashmiri Islam and its societal dynamics, I have tried to cover the areas that have not been fully discussed in detail, which helps to fill the existing gaps in the field of study. However, apart from the

problems that I have focused on in this study, there are also some limitations and unresolved questions or areas where further study is needed. Future research can significantly benefit from exploring the contributions of various *'ulama* and their role within Kashmiri society, particularly in terms of literary contributions. An important study could be done on the life of Allama Qasim Shah Bukhari and his impact on the literary development of Kashmir. This focused study can potentially develop our understanding of Kashmiri Islamic traditions and broader literary developments within the region. Another area that could be an interesting study to address the existing gaps in this field is the intricate dynamics between Sufism and Shia Islam in Kashmir. Studying the interplay between the Sufi orders and Shia communities in Kashmir can explain how these traditions have coexisted, interacted, and potentially influenced each other over time. A detailed study of Shia-Sufi dynamics could discover nuanced aspects such as shared theological principles, ritual practices, and the dissemination of spiritual teachings.